

REMARKS

THE DRAWINGS

The drawings were objected to on two grounds, the first based upon the examiner's questioning in Figure 1 of the showing of entraining members 28 and 29 on carrier element 23. In that regard, Figure 1 is a front view of torque-transmitting support 20, and it shows only carrier element 23 with its associated entraining members 24 and 25. Entraining members 28 and 29 are not carried by carrier element 23, but instead are carried by carrier element 27 (as described in paragraph [0036] of the specification), which is adjacent the rearward-facing surface of support 20 and is not visible in Figure 1. But although annular carrier element 27 is not visible in Figure 1, its associated entraining members 28 and 29 are indeed visible in that Figure because they, as well as entraining members 24 and 25, extend radially beyond the periphery of support 20, as can be seen in Figure 2. Thus, there is no inconsistency between the structure as it is shown in the drawings and as it is described in the specification.

The second ground for objection to the drawings is based upon Figure 2, as to which the examiner questioned what was intended to be represented by the so-called "blackened border" about rivet 30. As clarification, attached hereto as Exhibit A is an enlarged representation of the questioned area of Figure 1. As can be seen in Exhibit A, there is a "blackened border" about rivet 30 adjacent each face of support 20. Each "blackened border" represents an axial retainer for respective carrier elements 23 and 27, and they serve to

restrain carrier elements 23 and 27 against outward axial movement, away from the respective front and rear faces of support 20. However, as noted in paragraph [0042] of the specification, carrier elements 23 and 27 are, in fact, rotatable relative to support 20, and that relative rotational movement is possible despite their not being axially outwardly movable by virtue of a respective "blackened border."

With regard to Figure 3, that Figure is different from Figure 2 in that it represents a different embodiment of the invention. The similarly-functioning structure of the Figure 3 embodiment is described in paragraph [0045] of the specification.

In view of the explanations provided above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the drawing objection is respectfully requested.

THE SPECIFICATION

Paragraph [0053] has been amended to delete the objected to amendatory material that was presented in the previously-filed Amendment. As so amended, that paragraph is now in its original form.

The specification was also objected to on the ground that paragraphs [0003] through [0009] do not describe "related art." Accordingly, the specification has been amended by deleting the heading "SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION" from between paragraphs [0009] and [0010] and by inserting it between paragraphs [0002] and [0003]. The objection to the specification is thus respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 21 have been amended. In addition to terminology-based amendments, claim 21 has also been placed in independent form by including the subject matter of claim 1.

Claims 1, 2, 4 through 10, 12, 18, 20, and 21 were rejected as not complying with the written description requirement.

Claim 1 has been amended to delete the terms “relaxation” and “unload,” and to track the terminology that appears in the specification. In that regard, the terminology in the next-to-last clause of amended claim 1 is based upon paragraph [0039] of the specification, lines 12 through 14. The terminology in the last clause of amended claim 1 is based upon paragraph [0040] of the specification, last sentence.

With respect to claim 10, the phraseology questioned by the examiner is found in paragraph [0011] of the specification, last sentence.

Claim 21 has been amended to clarify the positions of the ends of the springs.

It is therefore believed that based upon the foregoing comments and the amendments to claims 1 and 21, the claims as hereinabove amended comply with the written description requirement.

Claims 1, 2, 4 through 10, 12, 18, 20, and 21 were also rejected as indefinite. The examiner noted several instances of alleged indefiniteness, and each of those instances has been addressed by way of amendments to the

identified claims. It is believed that those amendments respond to and overcome the instances of alleged indefiniteness.

Claims 1, 2, 4 through 6, and 20 were rejected as anticipated by the Wooldridge '200 reference. In that regard, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the carrier elements include radially-outwardly-extending entraining members, and that the entraining members are disposed between neighboring convolutions of the coil springs. Because the entraining members were recited in original claim 6, and because the radially-outwardly-extending configuration of the entraining members was recited in previously-submitted claim 21, and because the orientation of the entraining members between neighboring convolutions of the coil springs was recited in original claim 12, none of those recitations as now included in claim 1 as it is presented above involves a new issue. And as so amended, claim 1 recites a structural arrangement that is clearly patentably distinguishable over the Wooldridge reference, which does not show or even suggest radially-outwardly-extending entraining members that are disposed between neighboring convolutions of the coil springs. Instead, that reference shows bosses 26 that extend axially into the ends of the springs.

Because claims 2, 4 through 6, and 20 each depend from claim 1, each of those claims is also patentably distinguishable over the Wooldridge reference, and for the same reasons as are given above in connection with claim 1. Additionally, each of those dependent claims contains additional recitations that further patentably distinguish the claimed combinations of elements over the disclosure of the Wooldridge reference.

Claims 1, 2, 4 through 10 and 20 were rejected as anticipated by the Kern et al. '700 reference. However, as was the case with the Wooldridge reference, the Kern et al. reference also does not show or suggest the invention as it is now claimed in amended claim 1. Specifically, the Kern et al. reference does not show or even suggest radially-outwardly-extending entraining members that are disposed between neighboring convolutions of the coil springs. Instead, that reference shows circumferentially-extending fingers of the equalizer legs 68, wherein each of the fingers extends axially into an end of a spring, not between spring convolutions.

Claims 2, 4 through 10, and 20 each depend from claim 1, either directly or indirectly, and therefore each of those claims is similarly patentably distinguishable over the Kern et al. reference, and for the same reasons as are given above in connection with amended claim 1. Additionally, each of those dependent claims contains additional recitations that further patentably distinguish the claimed combinations of elements over the disclosure of the Kern et al. reference.

Claim 21 was not rejected based upon the cited references, but only based upon indefiniteness. And because the alleged indefiniteness has been overcome by terminology amendments, claim 21 as so amended recites allowable subject matter. Accordingly, it has been placed in independent form by the inclusion of the subject matter of claim 1 as previously submitted, but

including the amendments that respond to the section 112 rejections. As so amended claim 21 is now in allowable form.

Additionally, because claim 1 as hereinabove amended is believed now to be in allowable form, those claims that had been withdrawn from consideration as directed to non-elected species are now also allowable in that they depend from an allowable claim.

Based upon the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims as they now stand in the application are believed clearly to be in allowable form in that they are supported by an enabling disclosure and are no longer indefinite. Additionally, the claims as hereinabove amended patentably distinguish over the disclosures contained in the references that were cited and relied upon by the examiner, whether those references be considered in the context of 35 U.S.C. § 102 or of 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested with a view toward the issuance of an early Notice of Allowance.

The examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if this amendment raises any questions, so that any such question can be quickly resolved in order that the present application can proceed toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

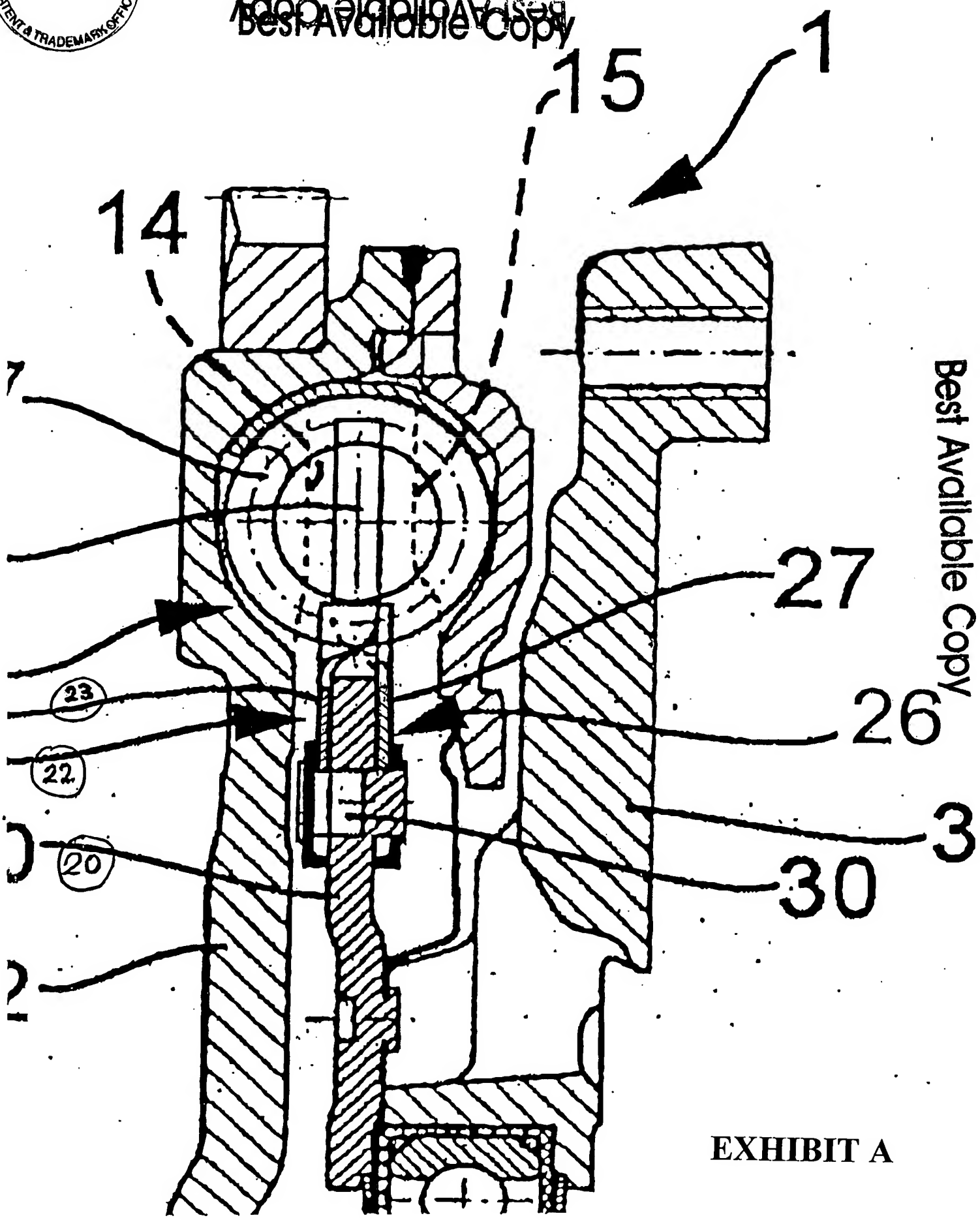


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EXHIBIT A